

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3590

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

JUEHCR/AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES 168

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY LUANDA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJ: CAN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERAL GROUPS WORK TOGETHER?

REF: (A) DURBAN 284, (B) PRETORIA 2567, (C) PRETORIA 2252

1. RECENT LAUNCHINGS OF VERLIGTE ACTION (VA) AND FORMER MINISTER THEO GERDENER'S NEW POLITICAL ORGANIZATION/PARTY RAISE QUESTIONS OF HOW IF AT ALL THOSE LIBERALLY INCLINED GROUPS CAN WORK TOGETHER AND, IN ADDITION, WHERE PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PP) FITS INTO PICTURE.

2. VA WILL BE FORMALLY LAUNCHED IN WESTERN CAPE AT MULTIRACIAL MEETING IN CAPE TOWN CITY HALL SEPTEMBER 12. ORGANIZATION ANNOUNCED IT WAS MOVING FROM CITY HOTEL BECAUSE OF TREMENDOUS INTEREST BEING SHOWN. SINCE INVITATIONS HAD NOT BEEN SENT OUT AT TIME OF ANNOUNCEMENT THIS WAS GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS MOVE

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BUT IT REMAINS BE SEEN HOW WIDESPREAD INTEREST WILL BE.

3. VA AIMS TO DEVELOP INFORMED AND RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC OPINION AND CALLS FOR A FUNDAMENTAL REAPPRAISAL OF ATTITUDES, POLICIES AND ACTIONS. IT ASKS ALL SOUTH AFRICANS TO ASSIST IN ERADICATION OF PREJUDICE AND REMOVAL OF INJUSTICE. ARGUS POLITICAL REPORTER IN DISCUSSION WITH CONGEN AND SUBSEQUENTLY IN PRESS ARTICLE (POUCHED) SAID VA HAS THREE POSSIBLE COURSES (A) TO START A NEW POLITICAL PARTY, (B) TO TRY TO CHANGE UNITED PARTY OR PP INTO FORMS MORE ACCEPTABLE TO VA, (C) TO TRY TO PERSUADE GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE ITS COURSE OF ACTION. HE FINDS ALL THREE TO BE VAIN HOPES BUT ADMIRES VA'S "ENERGY OF FRUSTRATION" AND DETERMINATION DO SOMETHING EVEN IF IT FAILS. IN CONVERSATION WE HAD WITH LEADING VA ORGANIZER WE RECEIVED IMPRESSION ITS AIM AT BEGINNING WILL BE MAINLY TO WORK FOR ELIMINATION OF VARIOUS PETTY APARTHEID MEASURES. VA LEADER PROFESSED NO WORRY ABOUT GERDENER GROUP SAYING IN EFFECT THAT THE MORE VERLIGTE ORGANIZATIONS THE BETTER--EVENTUALLY THEY WILL HAVE TO GET TOGETHER.

4. RECENT CHAT WITH SEVERAL PP OFFICIALS INDICATES THEIR CONCERN THAT VA DECIDED GO ITS OWN WAY AS MULTIRACIAL GROUP. PARTY LEADER EGLIN HINTED THAT EFFORT WILL BE MADE IN DUE COURSE TO GET VA, WHICH INCLUDES CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF PP SUPPORTERS, TO BACK PROG PROGRAMS. HE IS ALSO VERY MUCH AWARE OF FRAGMENTATION AMONG VERLIGTES IF GERDENER PROCEEDS WITH NEW POLITICAL PARTY. HE AND GERDENER ARE SCHEDULED MEET AUGUST 17 TO DISCUSS WHERE THE THREE LIBERAL GROUPS ARE HEADING AND WHETHER WAYS CAN BE AGREED ON TO KEEP THE RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF WHITE LIBERAL/VERLIGTE SOUTH AFRICANS WORKING TOGETHER.
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